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March 17, 1959

MEMORANDUM OF CONFERENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT
March 17, 1959 - 9:45 AM

Others present: Secretary Herter
Deputy Under Secretary Murphy
Assistant Secretary Merchant
Mr. Reinhardt
Mr. Hagerty
General Goodpaster
Major Eisenhower

Secretary Herter explained the reason for his requesting this meeting: to summarize for the President matters which Prime Minister Macmillan might bring up on his forthcoming visit.

Before addressing the briefing book, the President remarked about his surprise this morning, in reading the newspapers, to see that his speech of the night before had been interpreted as agreeing to a summit meeting. As a related issue, the President expressed perplexity over the inconsistent reports which he receives from Macmillan on the one hand and from de Gaulle or Adenauer on the other with regard to the conclusions being reached in high-level talks in Paris and Bonn. Mr. Hagerty and Mr. Murphy agreed that the reports coming from the British, French and Germans had been inconsistent.

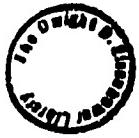
The President then went on to describe Adenauer's stated view that summit talks should be routine affairs rather than one-time operations. Adenauer believes there should be a series of such meetings. The President remarked at the readiness of people to tell the President of the United States to chase all over the world.

Secretary Herter then touched on the matter of contingency planning. He expected that in the meeting to be held later in the day this matter would be clarified. He expressed the hope that our current plans would undergo minimum change. We are currently receiving reports from overseas as to the exact details of what is going on. State is satisfied with the instructions as they stand, but Defense desires more precision.

DECLASSIFIED WITH DELETIONS
E.O. 12356, SEC. 3.4(b)
Agency Case # NSC-F-38-1262
NLE Case # 38-25947
416 NLE Date 27/60

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The President mentioned the question posed by Ambassador Lodge as to the possible use of the UN. Secretary Herter answered that we recommend going to the UN immediately if the Soviets turn down the reply which we are preparing for transmission within the next few days.

The President then turned to the question of stamping of identification papers. He admitted that if he were to place himself in the situation of the Soviets, he could see flaws in the U.S. position. We recognize the FRG, whereas the USSR recognizes the GDR. If a final peace treaty between the FRG and the GDR specifies that:

(1) there will be no interference with authorized traffic to and from Berlin, and

(2) that stamping identification papers will merely verify this identification,

then it is difficult for us to argue with them. The GDR could take the position that this identification is necessary for a checkpoint in Berlin to ascertain that a convoy did in fact originate in the Western zone. Secretary Herter agreed that the real issue is whether the Communists actually restrict our traffic. The President observed, however, that the USSR has stated that we must leave Berlin. Mr. Murphy added that stamping of papers might be considered the "thin edge of a wedge."

The President asked whether a treaty between the USSR and the GDR would be considered valid if there were no Berlin problem. Secretary Herter admitted that we would argue with such a treaty only when it cuts across your rights.

The President then considered an additional complication. Even if the GDR were to pledge themselves to carry out the responsibilities heretofore exercised by the Soviets, we could not, even though tempted to accept, give it consideration, because it would be death to Adenauer.

The President then expressed the opinion that Macmillan may be making a serious mistake even in the context of his narrow domestic political viewpoint. The main weakness of Macmillan's reported position consists in accepting a summit meeting without receiving any quid pro quo. It would appear that the British public would finally ask how long Britain needs to be slapped in the face. ::::::::::::::::::::

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In connection with the subject of German reunification, the President remarked that we seem to be fighting with pillows. Adenauer is now talking as if the first step toward unification might be a federation. The President asked what we currently mean by the term "reunification." At Geneva we had specified that reunification must come about as the result of free elections. Here we appear to be considering the prospect of a federation, that is, anything to enable us to include all of Germany in a peace treaty. Secretary Herter answered that the FRG is extremely leery of the idea of a federation, and the paper which is being worked on in the State Department includes many steps toward eventual reunification. (The President recalled that the process is expected to take three years.) Mr. Merchant then stated that Adenauer's fears are of the concept of equality. He does not wish the GDR to be given a veto over the actions of the FRG. A possible solution to this would be the concept of a Council of German States. This would avoid the actual governments of East and West Germany becoming involved. Mr. Murphy added that the Germans are busy working on all sorts of ideas for unification below the federation level.

The President then referred to our metaphor of "walking a rickety fence." Here it would appear that we are walking two fences in different directions. In particular, he had in mind the difficulties in backing both Adenauer and the British, whose views appear to be diametrically opposed. The President noted in the briefing book that Britain would just as soon see Germany remain divided. He pointed out, however, that the Germans are one people and the desire on their part to reunite is strong indeed.

Mr. Murphy then pointed out the difficulties within Germany itself. Mayor Brandt and Chancellor Adenauer are hardly on speaking terms.

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Berlin is a hotbed of Social Democrats, and party politics within Germany are highly competitive. He pointed out further that areas such as Saxony and Thuringia are strongholds of the Social Democrats. Adenauer feels that his party would be thrown out if reunification came about tomorrow.

The President turned to the subject of how to insure that the West German viewpoint is represented in a "summit" meeting. At the Geneva conference of 1955, we had set up a pipeline to Adenauer. In any future conference, however, the views of Adenauer would be so important to the Western delegations that it would be necessary to keep him in the next room. With Adenauer close at hand, we would have to face the criticism in our own press that Adenauer is a stumbling block for us. Mr. Merchant pointed out that during the Geneva negotiations Adenauer had come to a summer home near the city, where he was readily accessible.

The President now turned to the question of our position on nuclear testing. He feels it is no longer quite right for us to be rigid in the details on such matters as inspection merely because we have been rigid in the past. All available evidence indicates that nuclear testing is bad. The allowable dose of strontium 90 is being approached in some foods in some areas of the country. With this development, the President feels that we would no longer test atomic weapons in the atmosphere. There is a requirement now for a system which both sides know would work. He realizes that some small test shots might not be detected, and elaborately placed underground shots are reported to reduce the shock effect on technical equipment by a factor of 1000 to 1. Therefore, he feels we would be best off by agreeing that small weapons may be tested. We should work on a system which would operate without a veto and still be meaningful. This would comprise a definite promise to the world that we would cease testing in the atmosphere.

The President continued with the thought that the scientists will say that any nuclear war would be disastrous, at least for the Northern Hemisphere. This might point to a suspension of the use of all atomic weapons, around which we have built our forces, and require us to go back to conventional tactics. All this he cited in support of his idea that we should be working toward acceptance of a test ban, which may not be so good as we want, but would test whether both sides are acting in good faith.

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Secretary Herter stated that the negotiations are looking toward a three-week recess. Both sides have agreed only that they cannot agree on the veto system. The Soviets primarily fear espionage connected with inspection for underground testing. Secretary Herter believed that we can suspend atmospheric testing, possibly by the device of a renunciation on both sides or possibly by a treaty. Although the matter of the threshold has not yet been approached to the Soviets, it is expected that the Soviets will refuse any such proposal.

The President then referred to Macmillan's idea that inspections might be held to a certain finite "maximum number." This the President regards as infeasible. He feels that Macmillan derives his enthusiasm for this idea from the fact that Khrushchev told him it might offer some hope. Secretary Herter stated that the idea of equality of sides had appealed to Khrushchev. Mr. Merchant added that the whole thing was pretty vague.

The President continued with his idea that one thing we must bring about is a system where each side has reasonable rights, which may not be stopped by veto. If we are unsuccessful in bringing about such an arrangement, we will forego one opportunity to demonstrate that we can get one meaningful agreement. Secretary Herter mentioned that we have, in our negotiations, tabled many papers with regard to control terms, geared to prevention of their use as devices for spying. We have not yet approached the threshold question. He added that the Soviets have refused to go beyond scientific agreements of last summer. He and the President agreed that our technical agreements of that time had been a mistake. We had gone too far in basing an international agreement on the data received from one underground test. We are now in an awkward position.

The President turned to the question of negotiations on prevention of surprise attack. Here there has been some divergence of views between the State Department and the Defense Department in regard to the feasibility of a study to determine what we can concede in this area. The President expressed some annoyance at this and said that the Department of Defense is not a policy-making agency. Defense policy should be confined to determining what should be our defense posture. Accordingly, he directed Secretary Herter to initiate the organization of this study, and to send a memorandum to Secretary McElroy informing him that the President had directed that this

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study be conducted. The President will mediate any disagreements which come up in formulating the study.

The President now turned to the Middle East and referred to the remarks which Khrushchev is reported to have made about Nasser. Mr. Murphy described this Khrushchev remark as a tightrope, taking cognizance of Nasser's anti-Communist tendencies in viewing it as a "difference of opinion." Secretary Herter observed that the remark had been a hard one and had essentially told Nasser to keep his hands off Iraq. Mr. Murphy stated that we have here a great opportunity, and the President agreed.

The President then asked about the wool tariff quota which Secretary Herter says is under study. The President's understanding was that we have had a law since 1934 which is, in effect, similar to that on sugar. The procedure is to take funds from a tariff, and from those funds, give a bonus to the domestic growers. Secretary Herter mentioned that according to press reports, the British will desire to take up economic matters, and this might well come up.

The President expressed the desire that the State Department contact Caccia to find out the general subjects which the British would like to talk about. Since the length of time allotted for the visit is so great, it would be impossible to spend the entire time discussing Berlin without causing repetition and confusion. Hence, the President expects the agenda to be broad. Helicopters will stand by to transport such assistants as are necessary to and from Camp David. To this Secretary Herter answered that Caccia is still in the dark, but has wired the U. K. to secure what he can. The President then stated his desire for certain people to remain available in Washington over the week end. These individuals are Mr. McCone, Secretary Anderson, Secretary Strauss, Mr. Allen Dulles, Secretary Quarles, General Twining, and Dr. Killian.

Secretary Herter then brought up the matter of European security (Tab C of the briefing book). The British may suggest a zone of limitation of forces comprising a narrow demilitarized zone. This, he pointed out, goes along the line of the Fulbright recommendation.

The President then expressed some views on the idea of a demilitarized zone. Our basic position is that this is a "phony" measure as far as



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real security is concerned. However, it has a considerable amount of appeal in that any agreement which involves enforceable mutual inspection rights would be a small step in the right direction. The President visualized the possibility of a demilitarized zone 20 miles into the territory of each side, resulting in a zone of a total width of 40 miles. No military forces should be stationed within this zone. However, we could send inspection groups into this zone, as could the Communists. Complaints would be taken to the UN. The appeal of this idea, in the President's mind, is that at the present moment we have not one single agreement in which we operate under international law. (He cited the example in which we had recently boarded and inspected a fishing trawler under provisions of international law; even in this minor case, we had received a mild protest.) If we can make a start of this nature, the President believes sufficient confidence might be gained to lead to something else. (He compared this type of agreement to a group of small boys in the back yard playing marbles, learning for the first time how to play a game according to rules. Eventually, this increased confidence might lead to such agreements as the outlawing of nuclear tests of enforceable dimensions (large yield, atmospheric, etc.) The President finished with his conviction that the psychology of the Soviets is such that they will never begin a series of agreements by beginning with a large issue. Secretary Herter pointed out that the Germans would represent a considerable stumbling block in this matter, and Mr. Merchant added that Europeans in general would regard this as a move to neutralize Germany. The European nations would fear that this would eventually lead to a departure of U.S. troops assigned to NATO.

Mr. Murphy then referred to paragraph 4 on page 2 of Tab 3(c) which emphasizes the problem of placing our security and reunification proposals in close relationship with our overall disarmament proposals. The President agreed that we must do our propaganda work well.

As a final item, Mr. Murphy predicted that the British will be strong for the idea of Persian Gulf solidarity. They may possibly wish something in the communique that we "stand as one." Secretary Herter informed the President that we have already gone pretty far along these lines.

This ended the informal briefing on the Macmillan visit.

John S. D. Eisenhower

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